

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

-----241834Z 083927 /41

O 241645Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 518

S E C R E T I ISLAMABAD 2831

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM BYROADE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MNUC, PARM, PK

SUBJECT: NUCLEAR ISSUES

REF: ISLAMABAD 2782, ISLAMABAD 2786

1. BHUTTO IS INDEED A MAN OF MANY SURPRISES. JUST AS RUMORS OF HIS EARLY RESIGNATION SEEMED TO BE INCREASING, HE TELEPHONED ME. SAID HE HAD BEEN IN A MEETING UNTIL ABOUT 0400 HOURS THIS MORNING BECAUSE OF ME* HE SAID HE HAD HAD SOME OF HIS CLOSEST ADVISORS WITH HIM AND THE SUBJECT WAS THE SAME AS THAT OF OUR LAST DISCUSSION (I.E. NUCLEAR). HE HAD MADE CERTAIN DECISIONS AS THE RESULT OF THE MEETING. HE HAD INTENDED TO CALL ME EARLIER TODAY BUT HE WAS IN BED WITH A VERY HIGH TEMPERATURE HE THOUGHT FROM FOOD POISONING FROM PARTRIDGES KEPT TOO LONG AFTER OUR LAST LARKANA SHOOT.

2. BHUTTO SAID, IF WASHINGTON WAS AGREEABLE, HE WAS PREPARED TO ENTER INTO TALKS HERE WITH ME AS SOON AS I WAS READY AND HE WAS OUT OF BED. HE SAID HE THOUGHT IT BEST THAT WE START OUT ALONE BUT HE MIGHT WANT AT SOME STAGE TO BRING ONE OR TWO OTHERS INTO THE TALKS. HE HAD WANTED ME TO KNOW OF THIS DECISION OF HIS AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE AS HE KNEW I WOULD HAVE TO ASK FOR INSTRUCTIONS. HE SAID HE DETESTED LONG-DRAWN-OUT "HAGGLING" TYPE

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NEGOTIATIONS AND HOPED I COULD PRESENT THE POSITION OF OUR NEW ADMINISTRATION IN BROAD TERMS. HE WAS PREPARED TO RESPOND IN LIKE FASHION FOR WASHINGTON TO CONSIDER. AFTER THAT DECISIONS COULD BE MADE. HE SAID WE HAD PLENTY OF TIME AS I WAS NOT LEAVING UNTIL APRIL 13***

3. AS OF POSSIBLE INTEREST, I MIGHT ADD MY GUESS THAT HIS MEETING

LAST NIGHT WAS WITH POLITICAL TYPES RATHER THAN FOREIGN AFFAIRS OR DEFENSE OFFICIALS, AS THIS SUBJECT IS MORE OF A DOMESTIC POLITICAL PROBLEM FOR HIM NOW THAN ONE FOR THE BUREAUCRATS. I THOUGHT IT INTERESTING EARLIER LAST NIGHT, FOR INSTANCE, THAT PRIZADA, HIS EDUCATION MINISTER AND POLITICAL RIGHT HAND, TOLD ME BHUTTO HAD FULLY BRIEFED HIM ON MY LAST TALK WITH HIM. HE SAID HE WOULD TRY TO BE HELPFUL.

4. OBVIOUSLY I DO NEED INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE DEPARTMENT ON HOW TO PROCEED. IF, AS I GATHER FROM BHUTTO'S CALL, HE WANTS TO WRAP THIS PROBLEM UP BEFORE I LEAVE ON APRIL 13, THESE INSTRUCTIONS WILL HAVE TO BE AS FULL AS POSSIBLE.

5. IF THE DEPARTMENT AGREES, I PROPOSE TRYING TO MOVE QUICKLY WITH BHUTTO TO A DISCUSSION OF A FULL SOLUTION OF THE REPROCESSING QUESTION, BYPASSING AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE ANY PROLONGED CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES THAT BHUTTO MAY HAVE IN MIND, SUCH AS ADDITIONAL SAFEGUARDS, WORKED OUT IN A BILATERAL AGREEMENT WITH US. IN TALKING TO THIS LATTER POINT, I WILL USE THE ASME ARGUMENTS THAT I PUT TO BHUTTO LAST JANUARY, I.E., THAT TECHNICALLY WE SEE NO WAY TO COMPLETELY ASSURE THAT NO DIVERSIONS TAKE PLACE, AND THAT THE PERMANENT PRESENCE OF U.S. MONITORS WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE AND POLITICALLY UNTASTEFUL TO BOTH SIDES.

6. IF I SHOULD SOMEHOW BE ABLE UNDER TODAY'S CONDITIONS TO PERSUADE BHUTTO TO MOVE QUICKLY INTO A DISCUSSION OF GIVING UP THE REPROCESSING PLANT, I WOULD PROPOSE AGAIN THE KIND OF SOLUTION THAT HE AND I DISCUSSED LAST JANUARY: A JOINT PAKISTANI--FRENCH ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE EFFECT THAT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
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REPROCESSING AGREEMENT WAS BEING POSTPONED PENDING THE OUTCOME OF INTERNATIONAL DISCUSSIONS ON GUARANTEED FUEL SUPPLIES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF COUNTRIES LIKE PAKISTAN WHICH ARE DEVELOPING THEIR PEACEFUL NUCLEAR ENERGY PROGRAMS (ROY AHERTON HAS THE LANGUAGE I PROPOSED.). THIS UNDERTAKING BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND FRANCE WOULD BE BACKED UP BY AN EXPLICIT U.S. COMMITMENT TO PROVIDE NUCLEAR FUEL FOR PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR REACTOR PROGRAM, AND WE COULD CONSIDER, IF DESIRED, MAKING OUR COMMITMENT PUBLIC IN WELCOMING A JOINT GOP-GOF ANNOUNCEMENT.

7. IN ADDITION, I WOULD PRIVATELY OFFER BHUTTO WHATEVER PACKAGE WASHINGTON HAS AGREED ON. I FULLY UNDERSTAND THE DIFFICULTIES WASHINGTON ENCOUNTERS IN CONSIDERING THE SALE OF A-7'S AS PART OF THIS PACKAGE, BUT I DO CONSIDER IT ESSENTIAL THAT THE PACKAGE CONTAIN A SUBSTANTIAL SECURITY ELEMENT. IN CONSIDERING THE NUMBERS INVOLVED, YOU MAY BE INTERESTED IN A COMMENT I MADE TO KISSINGER LAST DECEMBER WHEN THE STAFF AT STATE HAD WRITTEN A PAPER SUGGESTING 60 PLANES RATHER THAN 110. I TOLD HIM THERE WAS REALLY NO POINT IN GOING THROUGH THE HEARTHBURN OF THIS ISSUE

FOR A COUPLE OF SQUADRONS OF AIRPLANES. THIS WOULDN'T BE SATISFACTORY HERE AND AS FAR AS CONGRESS AND THE INDIANS WERE CONCERNED THE PROBLEM WOULD NOT BE SUBSTANTIALLY AMELIORATED BY THE LOWER NUMBER. I GO ALONG WITH A COMMENT I HAVE HEARD OF BY THE CHAIRMAN OF OUR JOINT CHIEFS, WHICH I WOULD GUESS IS ACCURATE, AND THE FIGURE OF 1000 MIGHT MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE SUBCONTINENT, BUT NOT 110. FURTHERMORE, IF THERE IS ANY INCLINATION TO OFFER THE SALE OF AIRCRAFT AS A FINAL "BARGAINING CHIP" AFTER ALL OTHER STEPS FAIL, I STRONGLY URGE THAT I BE AUTHORIZED TO OFFER THEM NOW. BHUTTO IS NOT A MAN TO HAGGLE (ALTHOUGH SOME OF HIS ADVISERS ARE) AND I BELIEVE THAT OUR BEST CHANCE OF SUCCESS WIL COME IF WE ARE ABLE TO OFFER A GOOD POSITION AT THE BEGINNING RATHER THAN THE END OF OUR NEGOTIATIONS.

7. OBVIOUSLY OUR PACKAGE WOULD ALSO BE STRENGTHENED IN A PSYCHOLOGICAL/POLITICAL SENSE IF WE WERE ABLE TO OFFER CGEDITS TO FINANCE SOME PARTS OF PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR REACTOR PROGRAM. THIS
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HAD BEEN SUGGESTED TO BHUTTO BY KISSINGER, BUT I UNDERSTAND THERE HAS BEEN OPPOSITION FROM THE EX-IMBANK WHICH I WOULD HOPE COULD BE OVERCOME.

8. THERE IS OF COURSE NO GUARANTEE THAT I WILL SUCCEED IN WORKING OUT AN AGREEMENT WITH BHUTTO AT THIS TIME. IN WEIGHTING MY LATEST CONVERSATION WITH HIM, IT IS DIFFICULT TO ASSESS WHETHER BHUTTO IS NOW PREPARED FOR TALKS BECAUSE HE FEELS MORE CONFIDENT HE CAN WEATHER THE PRESENT STORM, OR PN HIS BELEAGURED STATE, HE IS INCREASINGLY RELUCTANT TO UNDERTAKE A CONFRONTATION WITH THE UNITED STATES. IN EITHER EVENT, WE WILL AT LEAST HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO FIND OUT IN THE NEAR FUTURE WHAT BHUTTO'S STANCE NOW IS ON THIS CRUCIAL ISSUE.

9. BHUTTOS EXPRESSED DESIRE TO BEGIN THE TALKS BETWEEN US HERE REFLECTS HIS WISH TO AVOID PUBLICITY AT THIS STAGE, AND I BELIEVE WE SHOULD RESPECT THAT DESIRE. IF IT BECOMES APPARENT THAT BHUTTO IS PREPARED TO MOVE TO THE POINT WHERE TECHINCAL ADVICE IS NEEDED, I WOULD OF COURSE WELCOME EXPERT ASSISTANCE FROM WASHINGTON OF A TYPE THAT COULD BE ARRANGED IN A LOW-KEY UNPUBLICIZED MANNER.
BYROADE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CAT-B, PROGRESS REPORTS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, NUCLEAR COOPERATION PROGRAMS, NUCLEAR REACTORS, NUCLEAR FUELS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 24-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ISLAMA02831
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: P840077-2473, N770002-0165
Format: TEL
From: ISLAMABAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770327/aaaaaxhw.tel
Line Count: 161
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 584620b3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: 77 ISLAMABAD 2782, 77 ISLAMABAD 2786
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26-Apr-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3011676
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NUCLEAR ISSUES
TAGS: PARM, MNUC, TECH, PK, US, (BHUTTO, ALI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/584620b3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009